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Give the Gift of a Lifetime...

Give a Kid the FUTURE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
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ADOPTION BENEFIT PROGRAM

Available for State of Illinois Employees

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State of Illinois
James R. Thompson, Governor

Many private companies pay adoption costs for their employees. . . This program will give similar treatment to State employees while stimulating the adoption of homeless children.

—Governor James R. Thompson

Recognizing adoption as a meaningful and viable way to build a family, the State of Illinois has implemented an Adoption Benefit Program to help employees who adopt a child. To encourage adoption, especially of children who traditionally wait longer for families, the Adoption Benefit Program will reimburse State employees for some adoption expenses incurred.

This pamphlet explains the Adoption Benefit Program—what it covers, what it doesn't cover, and how to apply for benefits. If you have any questions after reading this, contact Mr. Darren Horndasch at the Department of Central Management Services, 217/782-2548.

Who Is Eligible?

All permanent, full-time State of Illinois employees are eligible for this program. It applies to adoptions finalized since November 15, 1985.

How the Plan Works

The program pays eligible expenses up to a maximum of $1,500 for a waiting child (description below), and up to $1,000 for any other child. If you adopt more than one child, you may file for benefits for each child.

Who Are the Waiting Children?

Hundreds of children in Illinois are waiting to be adopted. Most live in foster homes, group homes, or residential centers operated by child welfare agencies. Because so many of these youngsters wait too long for families, the State of Illinois is determined to shorten their wait and find permanent homes for

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more of them. The Adoption Benefit Program will help us in this effort. Waiting children are:

- Racial minority children over age 3 and white children over age 11
- Children with mental, physical or emotional disabilities
- Children who need to be adopted with brothers and sisters

Eligible Expenses

The following adoption charges are eligible for reimbursement:

- Legal fees
- Court fees
- Adoption agency fees, including foreign adoption fees (adoption agency must be licensed by the State)
- Required medical exams for the child
- Initial immunizations for the child
- Transportation costs to bring the child to the adopting parents

Expenses Not Eligible

The following charges are not eligible for payment from this program:

- Expenses for adopting stepchildren
- Expenses for adopting children related to either parent, such as nephews, nieces, cousins, brothers or sisters
- Transportation for the adopting parents
- Medical examination fees for the adopting parents
- Cost of personal items for either parents or child during or after the adoption, such as clothing, food, etc.
- Expenses provided by the State adoption assistance program

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How to File for Reimbursement

The adoption must be final before you can receive benefits. You must have a certified adoption decree from a court in the United States. Then contact Mr. Darren Horndasch at the DCMS, Group Insurance Division at 217/782-2548. Be sure to have on hand all itemized bills and receipts for eligible expenses.

Health Insurance Coverage

Once you have custody of the child, you may be able to cover the child under the State Group Health and Life Program.

Full Blue Cross/Blue Shield or HMO coverage will be extended to children in your custody awaiting adoption. The pre-existing conditions clause will be waived as of the formal date you assume custody of a child as long as you currently have family coverage ("two or more family coverage"). If you are purchasing family coverage for the first time, the pre-existing conditions clause will also be waived, but the insurance company's liability will be a maximum of $50,000 for the first six months of coverage.

Adoption Leave

For details concerning an eligible leave of absence for an adoption, contact your agency personnel officer.

Tax Considerations

Under current laws, benefit payments are taxable to employees and subject to withholding taxes.

Any Further Questions

Contact Mr. Darren Horndasch at 217/782-2548 who can help you file for reimbursement, as well as get information about the Adoption Benefit Program. If you have questions about adoption, please contact the Adoption Information Center of Illinois—1-800-572-2390.

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